

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 EURE-00 INRE-00

SSO-00 NSCE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01 ACDA-07

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O 161545Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7158

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN

USCINCEUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 7050

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, SP, MO, AG

SUBJECT: GOS CONCERN OVER MOROCCAN, SAHARAN DEVELOPMENTS

1. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS, MFA ACTING MINISTER FOR NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS REFERRED TO "FRENCH INTELLIGENCE SERVICE" REPORTS OF MOROCCAN TROOP MOVEMENTS (BY IMPLICATION, A BUILDUP) IN THE TINDOUF AREA. THE ALLEGED MOROCCAN ACTION WAS SEEN AS STIMULATED BY A SUCCESSFUL POLISARIO ATTACK SEPT 11 IN TARFAYA, WHICH THE OFFICIAL CITED AS EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING AND EVEN GROWING POLISARIO CAPABILITY. HE ADDED THAT THE FRENCH REPORTS COINCIDED WITH A SPANISH INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT, BUT THAT THE SPANISH EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO OBTAIN DEPARTMENT VIEWS. MFA, HE SAID, FEARED THAT MOROCCAN RESTRAINT IN DEALING WITH POLISARIO MAY HAVE REACHED ITS LIMIT. ACCORDING TO GOS SOURCES IN WESTERN SAHARA, POLISARIO HAS APPROXIMATELY 3,000 INSURGENTS WHO HAVE DEMONSTRATED CAPABILITY TO HOLD OUT IN DESERT AND HARASS APPROX. 20,000 MOROCCAN TROOPS.

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2. ON RELATED TOPICS, THE OFFICIAL NOTED THAT THE MEETING IN THE CANARY ISLANDS SEPT 17 BETWEEN SPANISH FOREIGN MINISTER OREJA AND MAURITANIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOUKNASS WAS THE RESULT OF MAURITANIAN INSISTENCE WHICH HAD ORIGINALLY URGED THAT OREJA GO TO NOUAKCHOTT. MAURITANIA, THE MFA OFFICIAL ADDED, WAS EVIDENTLY FEELING ITS CONDITION AS THE WEAK PARTNER WITH MOROCCO IN WESTERN SAHARA, A WEAKNESS OF WHICH POLISARIO AND ALGIERS WERE EVIDENTLY AWARE. WHILE IN THE CANARIES, THE OFFICIAL SAID, OREJA WOULD USE THE MEETINGS WITH THE PRESS TO SEEK TO EASE CANARIAN FEELINGS OF NEGLECT AND VULNERABILITY FOLLOWING THE SPANISH PULLOUT OF THE SAHARA.
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